2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut



says that aged people are not in favor; they are beaten by their own children and are often forced to leave their dwellings and to beg from house to house. They are not admitted by the rich and poor people force them to do hard work, like dressing skins (Figs. 17, 18), for every bit of food.

The Yakut look for brides for their sons not only outside of their clans (*us*, *nasleg*), but outside of the *ulus*, or union of clans. A girl, say the Yakut, is really a lot of aliens. This saying is reminiscent of the old time marriage by capture. Marriage is now also exogamic, but *kalym* (bride-price) is given in money, cattle, and other goods. Practically, the *kalym* may be regarded as an exchange of presents. What the parents of the bride receive from the parents of the bridegroom is almost equivalent to what they give her when she leaves their house. Often the bride carries with her cattle and goods of a greater value than her parents received that she may not be reproached by the bridegroom's relatives for bringing only a small dowry with her. The young bride remains under the protection of her clan and family. Many common law customs regulate disagreements and dissensions: If a young woman leaves her husband because she dislikes him, her dowry remains with him; but, if she accuses him of cruelties, relatives on both sides decide the matter. The Yakut do not like to appeal to the Russian courts.

We have previously mentioned the exogamic character of the Yakut marriages, but some other tendencies have been observed in the northern districts of Yakut Province. The few rich families endeavor to keep their horses, cattle, and grazing places within a certain group of families through marriage of close relatives, insofar as this is permitted by the Russian church. By special permission of a bishop, even cousins are permitted to marry. In one case, known to the author, a man lived with his niece, a marital relation forbidden by the Church, though his neighbors avoided mentioning this irregularity to strangers.

The old Yakut clan was governed by family representatives or a family council in which women very often played a conspicuous rôle. After the Russian conquest of Yakut Province, clan ties became less important and the family head more despotic.

The Yakut were warlike and blood vengeance between clans occurred very often, but reconciliation was often sought through payment of a ransom or by giving a girl in marriage, the best way to end hostilities. It was more difficult to compound assassinations within the clan. To kill the murderer would deprive the clan of another member and the punishment had to take the form of ransom, service, or public disapproval.

## MATERIAL CULTURE

### Dwellings

342 352 554 562

The sides of the Yakut winter dwelling are occupied by wide wooden banks called *oron* (bank) or *olox* (seat). The northeastern corner (Fig. 19), where a door or an uncovered entrance leads to the cattle stalls and the other small corners, has no banks. The names of the banks and their uses are of considerable ethnographical interest. The entrance to the Yakut dwelling always faces east, the seat of benevolent deities. The bank directly to the left of the entrance has no name and is designed for household objects. Sometimes there is no bank at all at this point. On the plan illustrated (Fig. 19) Nos. 1 and 3 are called the right side of the dwelling, i.e., facing outward to the entrance. No. 1 is called *atax oron* (the first bank) or *āna suol oron* (the bank by the door). Its ancient name was *kōñūl olox* (the free seat). This seat is for unimportant, impoverished visitors, and serves as a sleeping place for male laborers. In the Kolyma District, during the marriage feast, the bridegroom sits in this place with his back to the banqueting guests.

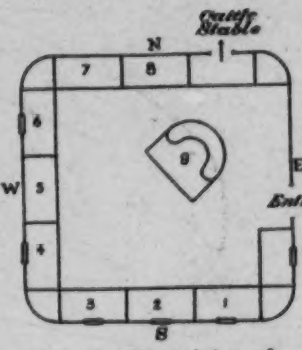


Fig. 19. Groundplan of a Yakut Hut, showing the Position of the Banks, Windows, and Entrance.

[513] [585]

No. 2 is called *ortuku uña oron* (the right middle bank), *tūnnūxtax oron* (bank near the window), or *orto olox* (the middle seat). The last is the most ancient name. The designation for No. 2 is the same as for No. 1. When a son-in-law visits his bride in the house of her parents before the *kalym* (bride-price) has been paid, No. 2 is assigned to the couple as a sleeping place.

No. 3 is called *billirik*. It is regarded as the best, most comfortable, and warmest seat and sleeping place in the Yakut hut. Usually there is no window over this bank, although in the sketch a window is shown. The most honored guests or the shaman invited for a performance is seated there. During a wedding the parents of the bridegroom, relatives, and the matchmakers, and other members of the wedding party have this place. The *billirik* is also known under the following names: *tūs-pediyér olox*, *ulūtuyar olox*, or *tūs olox*.

[585]

No. 4 is called *bastyñ uña oron* (the right first bank). According to Sieroszevski this position carries less honor than the *billirik;* it is less

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut



comfortable, has a window above it, and is within the range of the cold wind from the open entrance door. During a wedding it is occupied by the owners of the house and their nearest relatives; here also are seated honored guests when the *billirik* is already occupied. The *billirik* and the *bastyñ uña oron* form the "venerable corner." There a table stands, over which, under the ceiling, is a small carved and decorated shelf, called *holloruk*, on which are icons and images of saints painted on boards, to which wax candles, decorated with ribbons, beads, and other pendants, are affixed; or an embellished oil lamp is hung in front of the images. There on Sundays and holidays, headed by the hosts, the inmates and guests gather for prayer, so that this corner is transformed into a kind of chapel. During the prayers, the people stand in front or at the rear of the group, in accordance with their age and position in the community. They bow, cross themselves, hold lighted candles, and burn incense. In Fig. 20 may be seen a brass picture of saints fastened to a board surmounted by crosses. The ancient name of the *bastyñ uña oron* was *kōhūl olox*.

No. 5, the bank opposite the fireplace (No. 9) called *kātāharin*, is the family sleeping place above which there is no window.

No. 6, *kānčiārā olox*, is also called *xañas billirik* (left *billirik*) where adult girls (daughters and relatives) sit, work, and sleep. *Kānčiāra-jon* means young people in general.

No. 7 is called *xañas oron*. It serves as a sleeping place for female laborers or servants and grown children of both sexes. On this bank, hidden by a curtain, the bride sits during the three days' wedding festivities.

No. 8 is called *isit oron* (bank for cooking and other household vessels, from *isit*, kitchen ware).

Over Nos. 7 and 8 is usually a shelf called *dolbūr*.

All the banks beyond the *kātāhārīn* are regarded as belonging to the women of the dwelling. When facing the entrance, inside, the male half of the house is to the right and the female half to the left. The *kātāhārīn* (No. 5) or the family sleeping place and all the banks of the female half are supplied with calico (in former times, leather) curtains which are let down during the night.

From the Russians the Yakut adopted the use of tables and tabourets. Illustrations of models of such furniture may be seen in Fig. 21. The table is usually much lower than our tables and the tabouret is as high as the table. The table with refreshments on it is placed before guests sitting on the banks (*oron*) described above. The Yakut name for

½ [cf. p. 136, Category 116 -- ANALYST]

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut



177 a table, *ostuol*, shows its origin from the Russian word for table, *stol*.
352 In ancient times, the Yakut used tables without legs, or boards, which were called *sandaly*. These were placed on the floor before the visitors or on the bank between them.

354 The fireplace (*osox*, or *kömülüök*, from the Russian, *kamelek*, No. 9) is situated in the northeastern corner of the dwelling; its front part faces the dividing line between the male and female halves of the house. The hearth, quadratic in form, consists of a wooden trough made of logs or heavy boards, and lined with beaten clay. The length of the sides of the trough is about 5 feet and the height about 11 inches. The chimney, open in front and sloping backward somewhat, consists of poles, tied with twigs at the top, over the roof, and coated inside with clay. The mistress of the house is the chief guardian of the hearth which is the family protector. She alone is privileged to pass in front of it; all the other women must go around back of it. If the master of the house or an honorary guest stands in front of the hearth, the mistress too must pass behind it. During her menstrual period a woman is not allowed to touch the fire or to approach the hearth. A woman lying-in and her midwife may not enter the part of the house lighted by the flame of the hearth. A bride entering the house of her husband must throw a few little sticks into the fire and make a libation of melted butter. After these, she becomes a member of the family. It seems that the throwing of little sticks is symbolic of making fire, the task of a woman member of the family. A photograph of the Yakut hearth (Fig. 52) may be seen in the chapter on pottery.

Fig. 21 (70-9284, 9281). Model of a Table and a Chair.

● 562 841 844 585 354

342 171 Fig. 22 shows the exterior of the Yakut earth hut. When built separately from the earth hut for cattle, it has the form of a truncated pyramid, but in the illustration the two structures are combined. The cattle stable has an exit door to the yard, but there is also an inside door leading from the dwelling to the cattle stable (Fig. 19). The Russians call the Yakut earth hut, *yourta*, a name given to all types of native dwellings whether tents or permanent huts. The Yakut themselves call their earth hut, *balahan*, a name used also by the Mongoloid peoples of Siberia. There is a winter earth hut (*kystyk balahan*) and a summer earth hut (*sayylyk balahan*) which do not differ. The summer hut is

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut



713 similar to that of the Yakut. A bow is illustrated in Fig. 59 and a hand and arm protector in Fig. 60.

701 411 Yakut warriors (*sāpi, sāpi kisita*) were usually mounted horsemen (*minjār*), but there were also foot soldiers (*satījkisita*). Their weapons (*sāp*) consisted of a light bent bow (*sā*), a quiver (*kāsāx, sādax*), and arrows (*aya*)[1].

326 614 757 789 562 *Social Position of the Yakut Blacksmith.* The Yakut blacksmith (*ūs, timir ūsa, timirjit*) has the same rank as a shaman (see p. 107). According to one tradition the forefather of the Yakut, Elliei, was the first blacksmith. Another traditional blacksmith, named Chyky, was the teacher of warriors. He forged weapons for them and gave advice. Smithing and iron mining are inherited in certain clans. Some clans are composed of miners and iron founders, while others are smiths. The Yakut believe that blacksmiths are able to cure sick people by natural means and not through the assistance of spirits, as do shamans. They are regarded as clever, intelligent, and experienced. A blacksmith of the ninth generation is believed to possess some supernatural power. Such an individual has no fear of evil spirits and can forge the iron pendants for a shaman's garb without danger to himself. Spirits are generally afraid of the rattling of iron and the noise produced by the smith's bellows. It is of interest to note that there are no women blacksmiths, while, on the contrary, women shamans, called *udahan*, are believed to be more powerful than men shamans.

326 [554] Among all Siberian natives the blacksmith ranks high. His vocation is not regarded as a trade which may be learned by any one but as a divine gift. He is protected by special spirits. Among many African tribes the blacksmith is represented among the officers of the court. In Shugnan and other places in Pamir, the blacksmith's art is regarded as a gift from the prophet David. He is more revered than the *mulla* (literate man who is able to read the Koran). His assistants as well as any onlookers must show respect to the master and his implements. The blacksmith must be clean spiritually and physically; he must avoid evil thoughts and deeds and must wash before beginning to work. [778] The smithy is venerated as a place of worship and when there is no special building for prayers and social gatherings, the smithy takes its place. During communal feasts the anvil is treated with sour milk.[2]

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[1] Arrows had names differing in accordance with their shape and material: thus, *kustuk*, a single pointed iron or bone arrow; *cyca*, a bifurcated arrow; *onohos*, a spear-like bone arrow; *maltar onohos*, an arrow with a rounded head of bone or wood, used for squirrel hunting that the skin may not be defaced.

[2] Sarubin, J., Légende du Sugnan sur le premier Forgeron (*Bulletin de l'Académie des Sciences de l'USSR*, Series 6, Vol. 20, Part 2, pp. 1165–1170, Leningrad, 1926, in Russian).

6: Sauer--118 G-5 (1785-94) 1802 Yakut
562, 783

"Women are not admitted into the hut [RCH: in which the ceremony of the koumis festival is being performed]; nor are they, or the disqualified, allowed any of the koumis out of the first symir, which they call sanctified, as possessing the power of purifying and strengthening in a divine sense."

6: Sauer--118-119 G-5 (1785-94) 1802 Yakut
116, 273, 796, 526, 562, 555

"[RCH: in the koumis festival] They all now go out of the hut, and seat themselves on the strewed branches of birch, in half circles fronting the east. All the symirs [RCH: leather buckets] are carried out, and placed between the branches of trees stuck in the earth, and they commence drinking; every crescent having their symirs, tshoron, [RCH: large goblets] and presiding shaman, who fills the goblet, and pushes it about with the course of the sun. The quantity that they drink is incredible. Tournaments now begin, wrestling, running, leaping, &c.; and if any one carry off the prize in all the achievements, he is esteemed as particularly favoured by the deities, and receives more respect and [119] credit in his testimony than falls to the lot of a common man. When the ceremony is finished, they mount their horses, forming half circles, drink a parting draught, and, wheeling round with the sun's course, ride home. Women attend, and form parties among themselves at some distance from the men, where they drink, dance, &c."

6: Sauer--119 G-5 (1785-94) 1802 Yakut
116, 562, 756

"MAGICIANS; OR SHAMANS.

Men and women are both admitted to this order; but very few of the latter, as particular circumstances attending their birth or infancy can alone authorise their inauguration. Young men are instructed by an old professor, who accompanies them by day and night to the most solitary parts of the woods; shews them the favourite spots of the spirits of the air, and of the pit; and teaches them to cite their appearance, and claim their influence. I have heard most wonderful relations of their power, even from the Russians; but, notwithstanding I have seen their enchantments or incantations many times, I never could discover any of their feats equal to that of a common conjurer in England."

7: Shklovsky -- 51 T-3 (1891-92) 1916 Yakut
116, 562, 585

"The matchmakers accept the proffered refreshment, and then, still standing, repeat the terms of the marriage contract, and when the conditions are agreed to, the bridegroom enters. Often he is only a boy of thirteen. He takes off his belt, in which are his knife, pipe, flint and steel, and offers it to the bride, who is sitting near the fireplace. If she does not like the bridegroom she refuses to take the belt, whereupon all the company depart. Among the Yakuts, and generally among all the polar savages, the condition of women is much better than among the Russian peasantry. But the bride consents, and the marriage ceremony is ended."

9: Stadling--92 [2] E-3 (1898) 1901 Yakut
116; 342; 352; 562.

"The Yakut dwellings, the 'yurtas,' are wooden huts with sloping walls covered with a thick layer of turf. In the place of window-glass ox-bladders are used in summer-time and ice in winter. The window-openings are usually not more than a foot square in size. the fireplace is in the middle of the yurta, and is made of poles, placed close together and covered with mud or clay. Along the walls inside the dwelling run low nares or benches, between the wooden pillars, serving as sitting-places during the daytime and as bedsteads at night. The yurta is divided into two parts: to the right from the entrance is the women's and children's apartment, where, among the poorest classes, the cattle are also housed; and to the left that of the men. To the women's apartment men not belonging to the family are not allowed to go. The Yakuts generally have special yurtas for winter and summer, the latter usually situated near their meadows and haystacks. In the far north they often live in tents or huts resembling those of the Lapps."

ll: Lansdell--302 M-3 (1879) 1882 Yakut
276, 562

"They make also fermented beverages of milk; and in the height of summer, when the mares foal, an orgie is held, at which the men drain enormous bowls of this intoxicating liquor; whilst the women, denied the privilege of intoxication, solace themselves by getting as near to it as they can by smoking tobacco."

14: Krauss--176 [Z] E-5 (no date) 1888 Yakut
116, 756, 562

Besides the male shamans there are also female ones (udagan). They, too, are servants of the spirits of the nether world. As these women do not enjoy particular fame and no such authority as their male colleagues, recourse to them is taken only when there is no male shaman available; and even so only in case a thief or some stolen goods are to be sought.

The number of female shamans is larger than that of male shamans. According to the natives, those women are more efficient in healing insanes, so that in such cases only preference is given to them.

15: Popov -- 259 E-3 (no date) 1933 Yakut
116, 326, 756, 562, 778

"The tools used in the preparation of shamanistic paraphernalia become sacred among the Dolgans [RCH: nomadic tribes of Yakutized Tungus] and before the anvil can be used again for secular pruposes it must be smeared with fat of a wild reindeer. The latter is used also before forging to insure the anvil against cracking, for if an anvil is broken during the work it is considered a bad omen for the blacksmith. In general all old blacksmith tools are revered as sacred objects. They are transported on special spotted reindeer which are called 'the reindeer of the anvil', and a woman, being unclean, cannot ride on these reindeer."

19: Kharuzin --42 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut-1-2
116, 178, 562, 586 594, 837

The absence of any rights on the part of woman, among the Yakuts of the district studied by M. Pripuzov, is most marked... in the field of property relations. Her personal position is at the present time considerably better protected than in earlier times. In this respect one notes in the life of the Yakuts a definite, although naturally a very relative progress. In effect, even at present, the husband considers himself within his rights to beat up his wife if she neglects her household duties, if she is a spendthrift, or if she is unfaithful to him. The Yakut further has the right to put his wife out to hire as a workwoman, and to use the money earned by her. But he does not have the right to kill her; he cannot sell her, or lend her to someone else.

Instances of the cession of wives to other men, as is known, were encountered among the Yakuts up to the end of the 18th century, while the existence of the custom of lending one's wife to a guest is substantiated by traditions (Vsesoiuzone Geograficheskoe obshchestvo, Vostochno-Sibirskii Otdel, Izviestiia, XXVI, No. 4-5, pp. 218-19). As concerns instances of putting our wives to work, Prince Kostrov (Ocherk iuridicheskoe byta IAkutov [Juridical Customs of the Yakut]. p. 283) communicates the rather interesting fact that this practice has as its object to effect a separation from the wife: after a church wedding the Yakut rarely leaves his wife, but since such marriages are often consummated against the will of the parties involved, the husband sometimes abandons his wife, who customarily finds herself a lover, to whom she goes to live. In order to avoid prosecution by the authorities, writes Prince Kostrov, the husband and the lover

19: Kharuzin --42 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut-2
116, 178, 562, 586, 594, 837

make an oral and sometimes even written agreement to the effect that the former is hiring his wife out to the latter in the capacity of a servant with her consent and for the upkeep of the household.

19: Kharuzin -- 42-43 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut
116, 462, 562, 578, 614, 837

If the husband beat his wife without good reason, from the point of view of the Yakuts, she has the right to complain to the clan government or to apply for protection to the Natives'Court. The husband is not oblidged to maintain fidelity; he can abandon his wife, live in another place, cohabit with another woman. The wife, on the contrary; must preserve fidelity, although occasional relations with other men, if they take place with the consent of the husband, are regarded by the Yakuts with complete indifference. [43] Although at the present time the personal position of the wife in relation to her husband has changed for the better, in comparison with the past, to her lot, nevertheless, continues to fall the most arduous domestic labor. Except where the family is rich, or the wife is richer than the husband, the duties of the woman include more than the care of the household; the care of the cattle, the making of cheese and butter, the painting of the yurt, and often even the mowing of hay, cutting of wood, etc., if the husband cannot manage the other jobs by himself.

19: Kharuzin -- 43-44 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut-1 -2
116, 421, 562, 614

The property rights of women are extremely limited; however, even in this direction certain changes are taking place under the influence of the gradual recognition of woman's capacity. These innovations, however, are apparently only beginning to penetrate the consciousness of the Yakuts, and have not yet succeeded in conclusively changing the archaic views, denying property rights to women.

In relations to her own family group the woman is completely without rights: she must marry into a strange clan, and it is understandable that her kinsmen look upon her as a severed member.

Each clan or familial unit, under the influence of the impulse of self-preservation in the struggle for existence, strives insofar as possible to insure its economic existence through the accumulation of wealth. Naturally, it jealously guards its property against transfer into the hands of members of a strange clan; it is here that we must seek the reason for the fact that women have no rights in relation to the property belonging to their kin group. Among the Yakuts, the latter, as is the case everywhere with peoples on a low level of economic development, permits a girl to accumulate property by her personal labor: the product of her personal exertions, whether sewing or other handicraft, becomes part of her possessions, but among the Yakuts, as is the case everywhere, the girl secures the right of ownership of the products of her labor only in the degree that she performs this labor during her hours of leisure and rest, after having performed the household duties which fall to her share. The same rule,

it appears, applies [44] to married women. Woman, as a member of her kin group prior to marriage, and subsequently in the capacity of a worker for her husband and his group, has only a portion of the time for her own use, and the group concedes to her as personal property only what she can produce after satisfying the needs of her father's or her husband's family.

19: Kharuzin -- 44 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut- 1-2
116, 421, 428, 562, 614

The absence of property rights on the part of women in relation to their kin group in graphically expressed in the exclusion of women from inheritance. If the economic and administrative principle lying at the foundation of the family constructed on a blood basis makes quite natural the rule of Yakut customary law, that sisters cannot inherit from brothers, that upon the death of a brother his cultivated land passes to another brother, although the latter might already have a farmstead, then in the exclusion of women from inheritance from the parents, where only daughters survived, we must see a direct consequence of the clan structure, in which the kinsmen vigilantly watch to see that the clan property does not pass to a strange clan, which inevitably happens in the case of the marriage of a girl-legatee.

M. Pripuzov informs us that upon the death of a person survived only by daughters, the legatees are in the first place his brothers, i. e., the uncles on the paternal side. Further, if the father of the deceased is alive, then by the general rule of Yakut customary law in the district investigated, which makes the parents the legatees of their children deceased without issue, he secures a larger share of the inheritance than the other relations. Where death takes place without male issue, the situation is the same as if there were no issue at all. Finally, the remaining relations come in for their share of the inheritance. A part of the property is set aside for the support and subsistence of the daughters, the remainder is divided between the relations with the closer

relations securing a larger part (the father gets more than the rest), while the more distant relatives get a lesser share. A married daughter, like the unmarried daughters, is excluded form sharing in the paternal inheritance; in any case, she cannot inherit her father's cultivated land, and if there are no direct heirs, the farm passes to the closest relations.

19: Kharuzin --45 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut
116, 428, 562, 583, 614

The brothers, excluding their sisters from inheritance of the paternal property, are nevertheless obliged to support their unmarried sisters, to concern themselves with giving them in marriage, and to provide them with dowries from the general property. Mr. Priklonski, however, (Tri goda v ÎAkutskoi oblasti [three years in the Yakutsk territory]. Zhivaîa Starina, 1890, pt. 3, p. 80). notes that the share of the daughters in the division of property upon the death of the father is equal to that of the brothers; this share goes to the brothers, for the support of the sisters.

That in effect it is the economic principle, in union with the blood principle, and not the fact of the grant of a dowry to a girl entering into marriage, that lies at the basis of the exclusion of women from the paternal inheritance, is demonstrated by the fact that the dowry itself does not in any way correspond to the shares which fall to the lot of the sons upon the death of the father. Mr. Pripuzov unfortunately communicates only extremely fragmentary and incomplete information concerning the size of the dowry, concerning the objects which go to make it up, and concerning the relation of the personal property of the girl, accumulated by her own labor, to the dowry given by her parents at the time of marriage.

19: Kharuzin --46-47 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut
116, 421, 428, 562, 583, 614

Neither Mr. Pripuzov, nor, as far as we know, any other investigators of the customary law of the Yakuts, have given us a clear answer to the question as to the relationship in which the personally earned property of the girl stands to her dowry. Is this personal property.. [47]..combined with the dowry given by the parents, or does it form a separate type of female personal ownership among the Yakuts? We do not know. As concerns the dowry given by the parents at the time of the daughter's marriage, the absence of rights on the part of the woman in the agnatic group of her husband, as well as the very origin of the dowry in the returned part of the kalym, render completely natural the rule of Yakut customary law, whereby the woman is not the owner of her dowry. The latter, writes Mr. Pripuzov, "is completely at the disposal of the husband." The husband is the owner of his wife's dowry; he answers to no one for his squandering of it. A logical consequence of this order of things are the following rules, noted by Mr. Pripuzov, in the Yakutsk district: 1. In the case of the death of the wife the dowry is not returned, but passes to the husband and his children. 2. In the case of the death of the husband, if the couple had no children of the male sex, the wife can take her dowry and return to her parents. But she can only have the dowry back under the condtition that her husband made a disposition in that sense before his death: in its absence, the dowry, as a part of the familial-clan property, passes to the closest relatives of the deceased, and the wife has no right to claim it back from the heirs.

19: Kharuzin -- 47-48 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut -1-2
116, 178, 562, 587, 614

The right of the widow in the event of a childless marriage to return to her own family, the right of the husband to arrange before his death for the return of the dowry to his widow--all these rules, it appears, rose under the influence of the progressive softening of views on the personal and property incapacity of women. At an earlier time she was completely the property of her husband's group. Actually, we have no definite information concerning the existence of the levirate among the Yakuts at a former time; but the rules forbidding women to show themselves before the father-in-law and brothers-in-law, and vice versa, obviously bearing the character of so-called "sexual precaution" are traces of a one-time polyandry; finally, the absence among the Yakuts of any proper term for "widow," etc. (Sieroszewski, 569), compel us to assume that at a more remote time [48] the widow was considered the personal property of the family of the husband and probably passed to them as a piece of property. (1)

1. Contrary to the evidence of Mr. Gorokhov (Vsesoĭuznoe Geograficheskoe Obshchestvo, Vostochno-Sibirskiĭ Otdel, Izvĕstiia, 1883), Mr. Priklonsky mentions many instances of relations between the daughter-in-law and members of her husband's family: "This form of co-habitation is practiced often and quite freely, much more freely than, for instance among the Russians who conceal sin more

19: Kharuzin -- 47-48 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut - 2
116, 178, 562, 587, 614

carefully (Tri goda v i͡Akutskoi oblasti [Three Years in the Yakutsk Region]. Zhivai͡a Starina, 1891, Pt. 3, p. 61).

19: Kharuzin -- 48-49 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut-1-2
116, 178, 428, 562, 589, 614

At the present time a widow can remain with her children after the death of her husband. The liberating tendency in favor of women in the development of customary law in the Yakutsk district is reflected in the fact that if a widow has young children of the male sex, she becomes the complete mistress of her husband's property; she freely disposes of it until the children reach their majority. More archaic views on woman's rights, however, are reflected in the fact that when the children reach their majority they have the right to proceed to the division of their grandfather's and father's property without seeking the consent of their mother. To her is assigned some indefinite part of the property, but always smaller than the share of each of the sons. The right of wives to one-fourth part of their husband's property, which is attested to in the Sbornik obychnago prava Sibiriskikh inordtsev [Compilation of the Customary Law of the Siberian Natives] p. 234. probably was the result of the influence of the Russians, and apparantly found very little reflection in life. The Yakuts of the Yakutsk district, at least, do not know this rule, if we are to judge by the information imparted to us by Mr. Pripuzov. The Yakut clan, permitting a certain economic independence to a widow with young children of the male sex, who are independent members of the clan unit, completely sets aside the widow, if her late husband left only children of the female sex. In such an eventuality, the situation, as we noted above, is held to be the same as if the man had died without issue: a certain part of the property is assigned to the widow with daughters,

all the rest goes to the relatives of the deceased. Incidentally, a more humane attitude toward women sometimes induces these relatives to permit the widow and her daughters to live on the farmstead of her deceased husband, depriving her, however, of the right to dispose of the farm. In the event of the death of the widow, [49] ( or if she should marry a second time) the farm passes to the relatives of the deceased husband.

The facts adduced here testify that despite certain improvements in the attitude toward the personal and property rights of women, the position of the latter is still far from enviable: clan and household bases principally regulate the structure of Yakut life.

One cannot yet speak of the independence or equal rights of women among the Yakuts: even the rule making the parents the legatees of their children who died without issue, changes its aspect, if the deceased is survived only by a mother; while the father inherits all or the greater part of the property, the rights of the mother or widow to the property of children dead without issue are only equal to the rights of the other heirs.

19: Kharuzin -- 49 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut
116, 178, 426, 562, 594

The following rules, conceding certain rights to women, must be considered the result of the new views: 1. The wife has the right to complain against her husband if the latter, by his improvidence, is ruining the household; 2. The wife is conceded the right to contract debts; the wife is not responsible for the debts contracted by her husband for his own personal needs, and conversely the husband is not responsible for the personal debts of his wife. An exception is made when the couple offer surety for each other. These rules stand in such contradiciton to the personal and property incapacity of women that there can be no doubt of their later origin.

But when the wife, in the absence of her husband, has contracted "debts to cover the needs of the household or other matters pertaining to the home," the court comes to the defense of the wife and the creditor; the husband is held responsible for obligations entered upon with the object of benefiting his own household group.

19: Kharuzin --51-52 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut-1-2
116, 562, 582, 584, 884

The Yakut is not in the full possession of his rights until he is married. The unmarried son cannot even ask for a share of the family goods without a particularly valid reason, even if he does not live with his father, for instance, when there is an older son in the family. Only after marriage does the grown-up Yakut step forth as an independent personality. In the question of marriage the authority of the father over the person of his son finds graphic expression. It is true that, in the words of Mr. Pripuzov, in the selection of a bride for the son, or of a bridegroom for the daughter, the consent of the mother carries more weight than that of the father. In this privilege of the women before the man, which, incidentally, is guaranteed by nothing more than moral principles, is contained the only advantage of the wife and mother. But the authority of the father expresses itself above all in the right to give in marriage his under-age son or daughter. The information communicated, for example, by Mr. Shchukin (Zh. M. V. D. [RCH: I have been unable to determine what these initials stand for] 1854, VII, p. 26), that the Yakut himself selects his bride and announces his choice to his parents, is confirmed neither by Mr. Pripuzov nor by other investigators. On the contrary, marriages, or at least betrothals, of under-age children, appear to be very widespread, even at the present time among the Yakuts. "As formerly, so now," writes Mr. Pripuzov, "the Yakuts marry off young children, for which purpose the parents come to an agreement, determining the bride price, and the children have a church marriage upon coming of age." [52] On the basis of other sources there is even reason to consider the betrothal of

young children almost general among the Yakuts: this is done with the object of easing the payment of the bride price, payment of which, in installments, is begun by the parents of the bridegroom immediately after the conclusion of the agreement. "With the payment of the first installments of the bride price, the child-bridegroom acquires, so to speak conjugal rights with respect to his bride, who herself is still but a child. He is often a guest at the home of his future wife, sleeps with her and, having grown up, becomes her factual husband." (Vsesoiuznoe Geograficheskoe Obshchestvo, Vostochno-Sibirskii Otdel, Izviestiia, XXVI, No. 4-5, p. 214).

19: Kharuzin --53-54 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut
116, 178, 562, 587, 593, 842

Despite the fact that with respect to marriage the sons still are in a position of dependence upon the parents, their situation is considerably freer than that of the girls. A widowed daughter, returning to the parental home, again falls under the authority of the father; she is as devoid of rights as her young unmarried sister. The more independent position of the son is explained chiefly by the fact that the family and the clan prize children of the male sex more highly than those of the female sex: the birth of a boy is greeted by the Yakut with greater joy than the birth of a girl. Yakuts who do not have sons are scorned by their neighbors: they call them khatirik-uoma, i. e. "fire from bark (?)." The small esteem in which girl children are held by the Yakuts is indicated by the rule, whereby [54] a widow who marries for a second time must leave her sons by the first marriage with the family of her husband; but the daughters, as an unnecessary element in the family group, she can take with her to her new family. This rule is obviously of comparatively recent origin: it could arise only after the widow became free in general to marry outside of the confines of her husband's group, and after the kalym had begun to lose its significance of a purchase price for the bride, and had begun to return to the family of the bridegroom in the form of a dowry. Gaining nothing by giving a daughter in marriage, the Yakut familial-household group naturally regards daughters as a completely superfluous element in the family, and sets no value on them.

the Yakut system of kinship is close to the systems used by a number of Turkic peoples. 601

The position of women both in the family and in public life was inferior. The husband, the head of the family, enjoyed despotic power, and the wife could not even complain of harsh treatment, which was a fairly common occurrence, if not at the hands of the husband, then at the hands of his relatives. A woman from another tribe, defenseless and lacking in all rights, was burdened with hard work when she became part of a new family. 562

The position of older people who were decrepit and no longer able to work was also difficult. Little care was shown for them, they were given little to eat and poorly clothed, sometimes even reduced to complete destitution. 838

The position of children, despite the fact that the Yakuts loved their children, as pointed out by many observers, was also rather unfortunate. The birth rate was very high among the Yakuts and most families produced from 5 to 10 children, sometimes as many as 20 or even more. However, the bad living conditions, poor food and inattention resulted in very high child mortality. Apart from their own children, many families, particularly those in which there were few children, often adopted children, whom they often simply bought from the poorer people. 853 [163] [165] 597

Newborn babies were washed by the fire in the hearth and rubbed with cream. This operation was repeated fairly frequently later on. The mother breast-fed her child for some time, as long as 4 or 5 years, although in addition the child received a horn of cow's milk. The Yakut cradle was a long box made of thin, bent pieces of wood, in which the wrapped baby was placed, strapped in and left for some time, without being removed. The cradle had a groove to drain away the urine. Older children usually crawled about the earthen floor together with the animals, either half-naked or completely naked, and were left to themselves; sometimes they were attached to the table on a long strap to prevent them from falling into the fire. The children of the poorer people were trained to work from an early age, and had to carry out work according to their strength—such as collecting brush in the forest, looking after smaller livestock, and so on; the girls were trained in domestic duties. The children of the toyons received more attention, were mollycoddled and generally spoiled. 854 [853] 855 184

The children had few toys. These were usually wooden figures of animals, tiny bows and arrows, little houses and model utensils, made by the parents or sometimes by the children themselves; and the girls had dolls with model clothes, blankets, pillows and so on. The games of the Yakut children were simple and rather monotonous. The absence of noisy group games is characteristic; generally speaking, when the children of the poorer Yakuts grew up, they were quiet and sluggish. 524

## Religion

Even in the second half of the 18th century, many of the Yakuts had been baptized, and in the 19th century all Yakuts were registered as Orthodox. Although the transition to Orthodoxy was motivated by and large by material considerations (various privileges and grants for those baptized), the new religion gradually became part of their everyday life. In the corner of their dwellings there hung icons; the people wore crucifixes (the large silver crucifix-type embellishments worn by the women are interesting), went to church and many of them, particularly 771

Many families eat freshly frozen fish in the winter. In some parts in the North fish is made into yukola. The fish is slightly smoked over a fire and then dried in the sun; it is also customary to salt and smoke fish. In the central regions people catch large numbers of hares, and partridge, geese and duck serve as a subsidiary part of the diet of the people in the north. 262

At the present time the outer fur clothing of the Yakuts (short coat, fur trousers, and kneepieces) is only retained for working. In the winter it is common to wear padded coats and trousers in the settlements. Throughout Yakutiya the local style of winter footwear made from reindeer skin (eterbes) and fur stockings (keenche) have been retained. These are also worn by travelers visiting these regions. Felt boots are worn in the settlements and towns in the winter. 291

The soft summer boots have not been replaced by factory-made footwear either. In the settlements people wear knee-boots, ankle-boots and shoes. For fishing use is made of rubber knee-boots. For hunting during summer in the taiga, preference is given to ichigi.

Whereas the high-pointed hats have fallen into disuse and are not made any more, the bonnet-type hat covered on top with cloth and trimmed inside with fur is still used, chiefly in most northern regions. At the present time hats with flaps with the fur outside are often made. The shawl made of squirrel-tails is rarely found and has been replaced by the normal type of scarf. Wide-brimmed summer hats made of horsehair have also fallen into disuse.

In the towns and villages men's and women's clothes are close in style to modern urban apparel. Cloth clothing has ousted suede shirts throughout. It has become customary to wear underclothing and use bed linen. Prior to the Revolution many Yakuts never washed their clothes, supposing that it would help to make them last longer. Underwear is now regularly washed.

## Position of Women

The position of women in Yakutiya can be said to have radically changed. In Yakut families women used to occupy an inferior position (with fewer rights than among many other of the Siberian peoples) and took no part in public life. 562

M. D. Nartakhova, the daughter of a poor Yakut, has become a prominent figure in Yakutiya. She was educated at the Irkutsk Workers' University, after which she became a teacher, then worked as a political affairs instructor for the Central Executive Committee of the Yakut Republic, a Rayon Soviet chairman, an Obkom Party instructor, Rayon Committee Secretary of the Communist Party and since 1947 has been Social Security Minister for the Yakut ASSR. At the present time Comrade Nartakhova is chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Yakut ASSR. 562 159

In 1952, 44 women were elected to the Supreme Soviet of the Yakut ASSR and 3 women were made deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and RSFSR, while more than 2000 women (34.5 percent of all those elected) were members of the local soviets. Yakut women at the present time, occupy a great variety of posts. They are to be found as chairmen of the collective-farm administrations, chairmen of the nasleg soviets, and in administrative posts in the Communist Party and Komsomol. Many Yakut women have become teachers, doctors, nurses, and cultural officials. 1756 women work in education, 500 are doctors and 24 are scientists. In 562

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2



562 1949, 55 women were working as rural soviet chairmen. About 500 girls from Yakutiya are studying at different universities in the country. In the northern regions there were once hunters who used not even to mention the word "hunting" in front of women because of superstitious belief, but now there are even women hunters; the present figure is as many as 1000 women hunters and fishers. Many of them have gained the title of "advanced hunter."

## Education

871 During the tsarist regime hardly any Yakuts were literate.[1] As soon as the Soviet regime had been consolidated, school construction was developed on a wide scale, as shown by the following table:

| Schools | 1917 | 1948 |
|---|---|---|
| Primary | 164 | 424 |
| 7-year | 5 | 149 |
| Secondary | 4 | 30 |
| Total | 173 | 603 |

In 1917 there were 4660 children at school, but by 1948 the number was 62,942.

In the 1951-1952 academic year there were more than 600 schools functioning in the Yakut Republic, attended by about 66,000 pupils. In the 1955-56 academic year there were 20,000 pupils living in dormitories. When Yakutiya received its autonomy by a decision of the Council of Ministers of the Yakut ASSR, instruction in primary schools was changed to the Yakut language. This made it easier for Yakut schoolchildren to master their [191] subjects. From 1933 on, the teaching of all subjects in the 5th to 7th classes was switched to the Yakut language.

19 The teaching of main subjects in schools in the vernacular not only 212 helped the pupils to acquire knowledge, but also furthered the rapid development of the Yakut language and the solution of problems of terminology and orthography. From 1933 to 1947, about 400 book titles were published in the Yakut language in overall editions of several million copies.

874 Three teacher's schools and one pedagogical institute turn out trained [875] teachers for the Yakut Republic. In 1955 there were more than 4500 teachers, which was 15 times more than in 1917. The 17 tekhnikums and special secondary schools are attended by more than 3000 students. These academic establishments train teachers, agronomists, ship mechanics, lawyers, technicians, etc. A 2-year Communist Party School has been opened in Yakutsk and a Marxist-Leninist University. More than 1000 Yakuts are studying at universities of Moscow, Leningrad and Irkutsk.

Yakutiya has also trained its own scientific personnel. About 70 scientists have the degree of Candidate in Science in the fields of history, pedagogy, philology, agriculture, and other subjects. There are also doctors of science.

212 In 1942 Yakutiya celebrated the end of illiteracy among the adult population. Over the years of the Soviet regime more than 155,000 illiterate

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[1] This conflicts with other data indicating the existence of a pre-Revolutionary Yakut intelligentsia of some dimensions and influence.—Ed.